

HOUSE RESOLUTION 207

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to recognize the Great Debate between Wiley College and the University of Mississippi on March 1, 2012, at the African-American Museum of Memphis.

WHEREAS, this body takes great pride in recognizing and celebrating those special events that put on display exceptional students who have accepted the challenge to represent their institutions of higher education in academic competition; and

WHEREAS, one such special event will be the "Great Debate" on March 1, 2012 at the African-American Museum of Memphis when the debate teams from Wiley College of Marshall, Texas, and the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) face each other as the finale of African-American History Month 2012; and

WHEREAS, the topic for the debate is "Whether President Obama should be re-elected or not," with the decision to debate pro or con positions determined by the flipping of a coin. After hearing the debate, a panel of judges will award the winning school the prestigious Melvin B. Tolson Trophy; and

WHEREAS, the Melvin B. Tolson Trophy pays tribute to legendary Wiley College Professor Melvin B. Tolson, who led the Wiley College debate team to victory over the then-National Debate Champion team of the University of Southern California in 1935; and

WHEREAS, the acclaimed film, "The Great Debaters," depicted this special moment in African-American history as the debate team from Wiley College handily vanquished their top-ranked opponents in spite of being denied admittance to the Debate Society whose rules excluded Negro Colleges; and

WHEREAS, it is highly appropriate that we commemorate such a historic occasion and commend this exemplary academic competition to be held in the beautiful City of Memphis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we commend and applaud both the debates teams from Wiley College and the University of Mississippi on their participation in the Great Debate at the African-American Museum of Memphis as a most fitting finale of African-American History Month 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.